PRINTRONIX®

Operator's Guide

T3204 and T3304 Series Label Printers

LP+™, IGP/PGL & IGP/VGL

T3204 and T3304 Series Label Printers
LP+™, IGP/PGL & IGP/VGL
Operator's Guide

PRINTRONIX ®

P/N 136578–001, Rev B

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This device complies with Part 15 of the FCC Rules. Operation is subject to the following two conditions: (1) this device may not cause harmful interference, and (2) this device must accept any interference received, including interference that may cause undesired operation.

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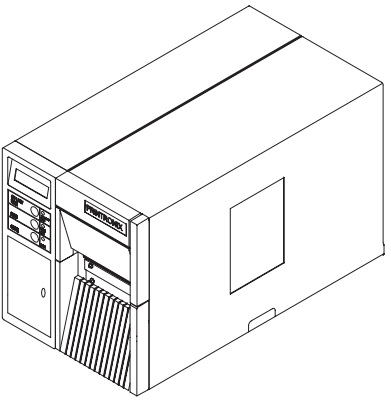
About this Operator's Guide

This guide covers basic operating procedures for the Printronix®. T3204 and T3304 label printers. Printronix wants you to feel comfortable and confident using the T3204 and T3304 label printers, and this guide.



The guide has been designed to meet the needs of all users, from beginners to those experienced with thermal printers. All text and illustrations refer to both T3204 and T3304 printers except when noted.

Follow the directions in this guide along with those in your *Setup Guide* in order to avoid injury to you and damage to the printer.

Conventions

Notes, Cautions, and Warnings

Notes provide supplemental information that could affect printer operation or use.

note

Cautions describe conditions that could damage the printer.

caution

Warnings describe conditions that could harm you as well as damage the equipment.

warning

Message Display

These boxes show display messages as they appear on the printer.

PAPER EMPTY

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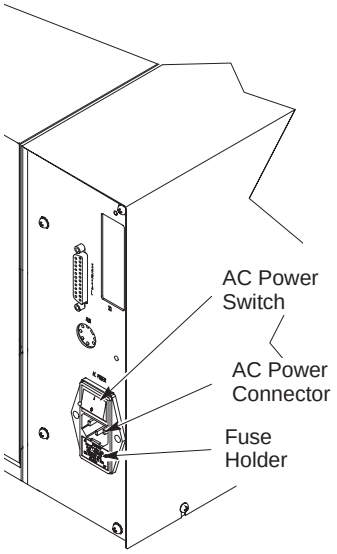
Powering On the Printer

caution

Before powering on the printer, make sure it is plugged into the appropriate power source.

Refer to the "Select a Site" section in Chapter 2 of the *Setup Guide* for information on proper power sources.



The power switch is located on the lower right–hand corner of the rear of the printer. It is marked ○ for power OFF and | for power ON.

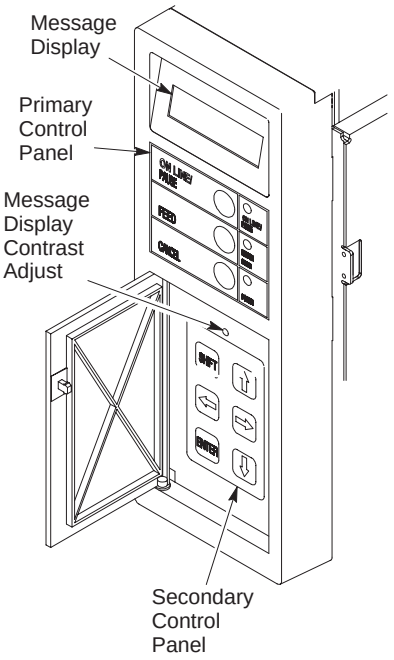
For help with diagnosing printer problems, printer self–test routines are automatically run during the power–on cycle. Further diagnostic tests can be performed using the secondary operator panel functions. They are covered in detail in the *Setup Guide*.

Using the Primary Operator Panel

Use the primary operator panel to perform routine operations. The panel contains three operator-accessible keys and three indicator lights, used to control and indicate printer status.

note

The functions and meanings of some of the keys and indicators on the primary operator panel will change depending on the firmware installed. This manual describes printer operation with Printronix LP+, IGP/PGL or IGP/VGL emulation firmware installed. If your printer has Printronix IGP/FGL emulation firmware, please refer to the T3306 and T3308 Label Printers Operator's Guide*, p/n 136452–001.*



There is also a *secondary* operator panel, consisting of a message display and six keys. This panel is used to configure the printer and to run self–tests, via the configuration menus.

Selections from the *main menu* will need to be changed when changes in the print mode, media size, options and various other configuration items are required for the printer. Instructions begin on page 23 of this guide.

note

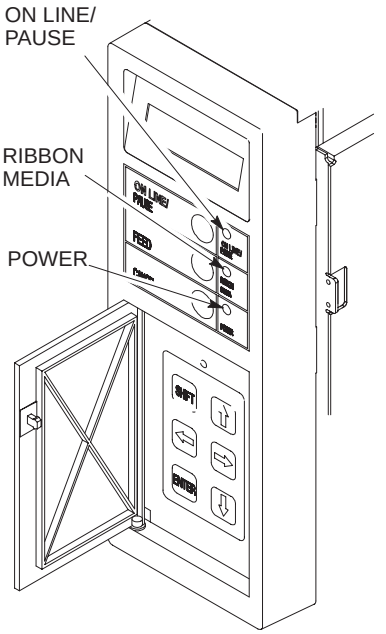
Refer to the "Configuring the Printer" chapter in the Setup Guide for complete instructions in how to access and use the secondary operator panel.

The following pages describe the status indicator lights and keys comprising the *primary* operator panel, along with the related operating modes.

Status Indicator Lights

The three status indicator lights (LEDs) provide information about current printer operation, as follows:

- **POWER** — Lit when the printer is powered on.
- **ON LINE/PAUSE** — Lit when the printer is on line or blinking when the printer is off line or in a standby/fault state.
- **RIBBON MEDIA** — Lit when the printer sensors fail to detect label media or the presence of a ribbon.



Keys

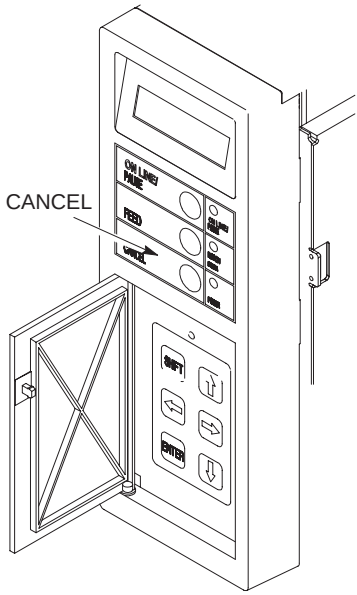
Three primary operator panel keys provide for the basic, day-to-day control of the printer, as described on the following pages.

CANCEL

Function Cancels all jobs, if pressed when the printer is off line *and* not in a fault state. Also clears faults and puts the printer in the off line mode.

Action *With the printer off line,* cancel the current run of labels by pressing once.
Also, if a fault condition persists, press once to clear fault.

Result The printer will then cancel all jobs and clear all imaged and buffered data.
Or, in the case of fault clearing, the printer will go off line *without* canceling jobs.



note

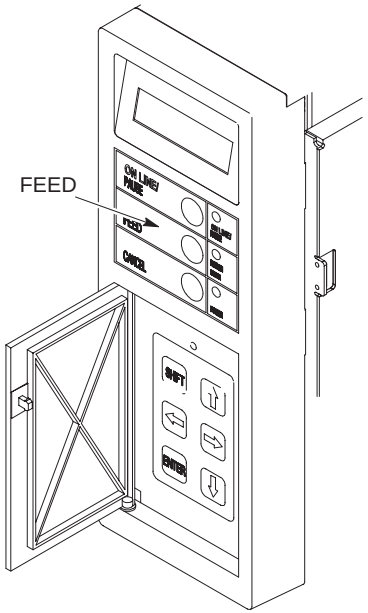
Pressing the CANCEL key has no effect when the printer is on line and running.

FEED

Function Prints any labels that have been imaged and also the current label in progress.

Action *With the printer off line,* press once to print labels.

Result The printer will print any labels that have been imaged and also the current label in progress.



note

If no label is being processed, a blank page will print.

ON LINE/PAUSE

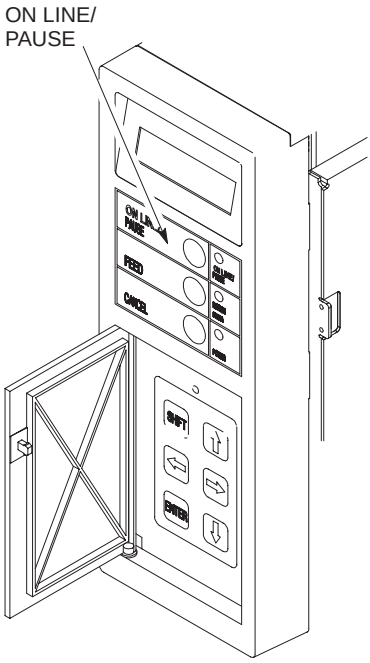
Function Temporarily stops the printing of labels and controls the on line/ off line status of the printer.

Action To pause the printer, press once. The on line/pause indicator will blink.

To place the printer in the on line mode, press once. The on line/ pause indicator will light.

Result When the printer is paused, the print mechanism will stop when printing of the current label is completed. All data will be held in memory.

When the printer is in the on line mode, the remaining labels in the batch will be printed.



Printing Modes

The printer is capable of printing in either of two modes:

- Direct Thermal only (T3204–20 and T3304–20)
- Direct Thermal *and* Thermal Transfer (T3204–21 and T3304–21)

The two modes have in common the application of heat to produce the printed image.They differ in the way the heat is applied.

In thermal transfer printing, the individual dot elements of the printhead apply heat to a ribbon. The ink on the ribbon is a specially formulated material that melts onto the print media, bonding with the media to produce an image.

Direct thermal printing does not use a ribbon. Instead, the printer applies heat *directly* to the print media, which reacts to the heat by turning black.

note

All illustrations reflect the direct thermal and *thermal transfer printer configuration (T3204–21 and T3304–21).*

This mode requires the use of a special direct thermal print media. It also requires that the ribbon be removed, if already installed.

note

Using direct thermal print media with a ribbon installed will produce unacceptable print quality.

The desired mode is selected through the printer menu system. The main menu is accessed via the secondary operator panel.

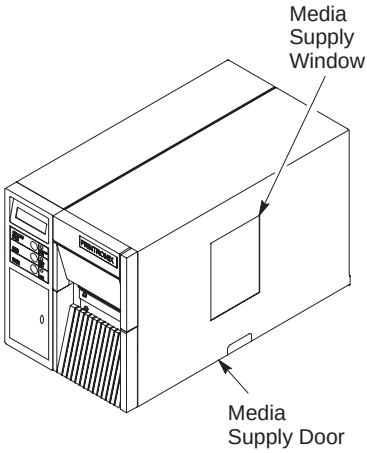
note

Refer to the "Configuring the Printer" chapter in the Setup Guide *for complete instructions in how to access and use the secondary operator panel.*

Loading Media

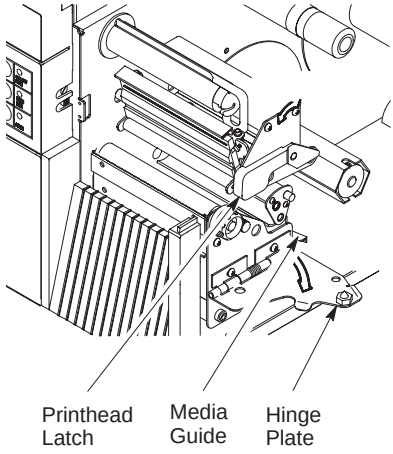
The printer accepts a wide range of media. It can be loaded with roll–fed, fan–folded, or die–cut continuous media of either thermal transfer or direct thermal type. Media width can range from 0.75 inches (19.1 mm) to 4.65 inches (118.1 mm). Media thickness can range from 0.0025 inches (0.0635 mm) to 0.01 inches (0.254 mm).

Use the following procedures to load media of various kinds into the printer.



1 Press **ON LINE/PAUSE** to place the printer in the off line mode.

Open the media supply door.



2 Rotate the printhead latch counterclockwise to unlatch, and raise the printhead to an upright position.

3 Lower the hinge plate down. Slide the media guide to the outer edge, and rotate it to the down position.

4 If you are loading **fan–folded** media, skip the next step and go on to step 6.

5 To load **roll–fed** media, continue as follows:

note

Printers have been built with two types of standard media hubs: metal and plastic. From the diagrams below, follow the media loading instructions which match your printer.

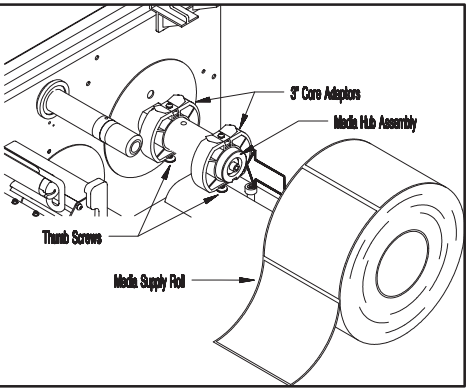
note

Do not use the media retainer if the media supply roll is wider than 4 inches.

METAL HUB

a. If you are using media with a 3” core, place the 3” media core adapters on the media hub assembly.

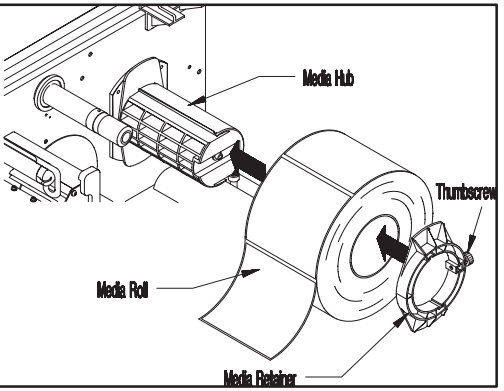
b. Place the media supply roll on the media hub assembly. Slide the media retainer against the supply roll and tighten the thumb screw.



PLASTIC HUB

a. Place the 3” media supply roll on the media hub assembly.

b. Slide the media retainer against the supply roll and tighten the thumb screw.



c. Skip the next step and continue with step 7.

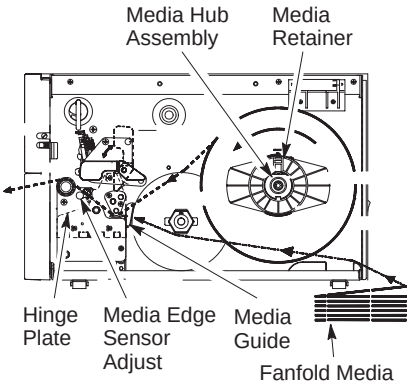
6 To load **fan–folded** media, proceed as follows:

a. Place the media supply either behind or beneath the printer, as shown.

Make sure the media feeds freely from the container.

b. Route the media through the rear media loading slot.

c. Continue with step 7.



7 Route the media over the guide plate, under the media sensor and over the platen roller (located beneath the printhead).

8 Rotate the media guide up, and slide it to the edge of the media.

9 Continue feeding the media under the printhead until the media exits the printhead assembly.

Slide the media forward, until it extends beyond the printer front slot. Ensure that all media guides are adjusted to the width of stock being used.

10 If the media you are loading is of the *same width* as the current media, skip the next step and go on to step 12.

11 If you are loading media that is of a *different* width from the current media, you may need to adjust print quality as follows:

note

The printer is aligned at the factory with 4–mil–thick label stock, whose width is the maximum width accepted by the printer.

a. Raise the hinge plate, and lower the printhead by rotating the printhead latch clockwise to the latched position.

b. Press **ON LINE/PAUSE** to enable printing.

c. Send a sample test print file from the host, or run the internal diagnostic test file.

note

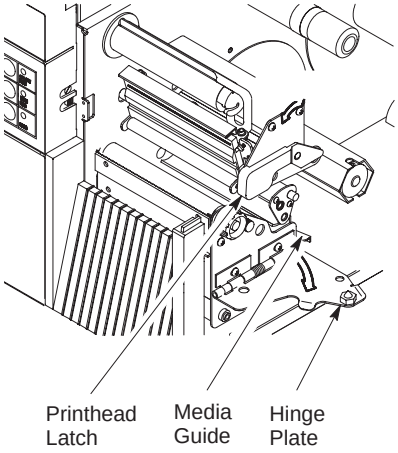
It may be necessary to feed several labels before proper alignment of the media occurs.

d. If the print quality is acceptable, go on to step 12.

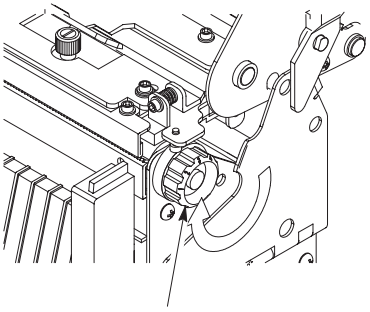
e. Otherwise, press **ON LINE/PAUSE** again to place the printer in the off line mode.

note

Although the head leveling knob can be adjusted during printing, it is recommended that this adjustment be done while the printer is paused.



f. Pull the head leveling knob outward, and rotate it one detent. Rotating the knob clockwise from position 1 will adjust the printer for media that is narrower than the maximum width accepted by the printer. When the head leveling knob is rotated clockwise from the detent position just before position 1 *to* position 1, the printhead will return to the maximum media width position.



Head Leveling Knob

note

Each of the 18 positions on the head leveling knob will raise or lower the printhead 0.003 inches (0.076 mm), giving a maximum adjustment range of 0.054 inches (1.37 mm).

g. Return to step **a** and repeat until you obtain the desired print quality.

12 If you do *not* intend to use the optional media rewind hub, skip the next step and go on to step 14.

note

Use the rewind hub to print quantities of labels in single batches, for later use. The hub automatically rolls up the label media for convenient handling. It is also used with the automatic label peel-off dispenser option to roll up the media backing after labels have been peeled off.

13 To use the media rewind hub, complete the following procedure.

a. Lower the lower right-hand front panel.

b. Remove the arc plate from its stored position, and install on the front of the printer.

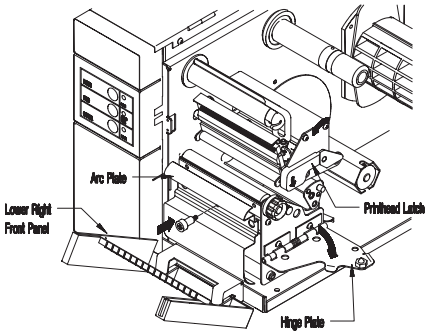
Route the media around the arc plate and to the media rewinder.

c. Place the clasp over the end of the media, and rotate the media rewinder a few turns.

Rotate the media guide up, and slide it to the media edge.

d. Lift and snap the lower right-hand front panel closed.

Continue with step 14.



14 Raise the hinge plate, and lower the printhead by rotating the printhead latch clockwise to the latched position.

15 Close the media supply door.

16 Press **ON LINE/PAUSE** to enable printing.

note

It may be necessary to feed several labels before proper alignment of the media occurs.

17 The **peel-and-present** option allows for on-demand label dispensing. Although the peel-and-present mechanism is included with every printer, the label present sensor and internal rewind options are required to use this feature. To use the optional peel-and-present, follow the instructions outlined below.

a. Turn off the printer, and open the side access cover.

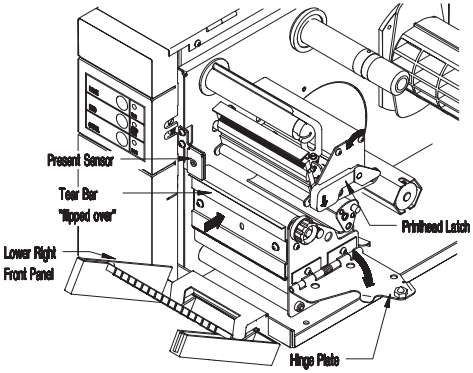
b. Rotate the printhead latch counterclockwise to raise the printhead.

c. Lower the hinge plate and the lower front panel.

d. Using a Philips screwdriver, remove the tear bar, invert it (flip it over), and reinstall it.

e. Place the media supply roll on the media hub assembly. Slide the media retainer against the supply roll, and tighten the thumbscrew.

f. Route the media over the guide plate, through the media sensor, and over the platen roller (located beneath the printhead).



g. Route the media liner (backing) around the tear bar to the media rewinder.

h. Place the clasp over the end of the media, and rotate the media rewinder a few turns.

i. Rotate the media guide up, and slide it to the media's edge.

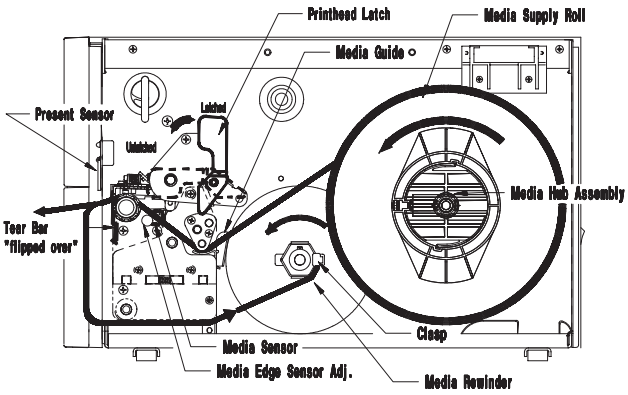
j. Lift and snap the lower right front panel closed.

k. Raise the hinge plate, and latch the printhead by rotating the printhead latch clockwise to the latched position.

l. Close the side cover.

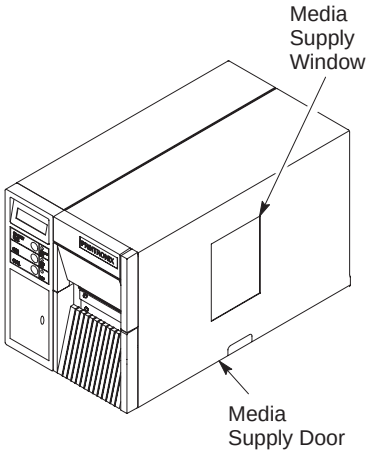
note

It is possible to use the present sensor only (without inverting the tear bar) to provide on-demand label printing in the tear-off mode. To operate in this mode, media should be routed as shown in step f, and the Label Present menu selection should be enabled.



Unloading Media

Use the following procedure to unload media from the printer.

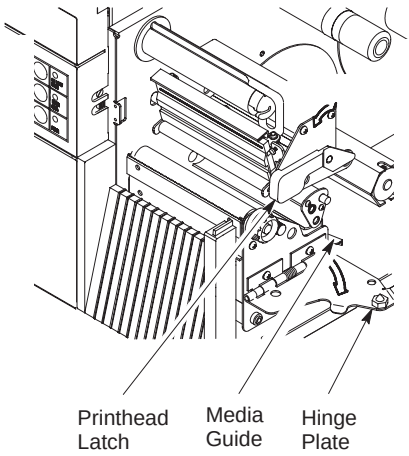


1 Press **ON LINE/PAUSE** to place the printer in the off line mode.

Open the media supply door.

2 Rotate the printhead latch counterclockwise to unlatch, and raise the printhead to an upright position.

3 Lower the hinge plate down. Slide the media guide to the outer edge, and rotate it to the down position.



4 Cut the media either before or after the front slot, depending on whether or not the rewind hub is being used.

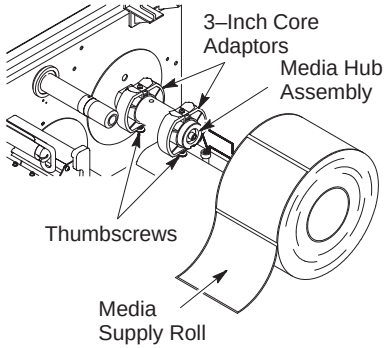
note

If the media rewind hub was being used, you may choose to continue winding the media onto the hub or to roll it back onto the supply roll (media hub).

5 If the installed media is **fan–folded**, skip the next step and go on to step 7.

Otherwise, continue with step 6.

6 To remove **roll–fed** media, proceed as follows:

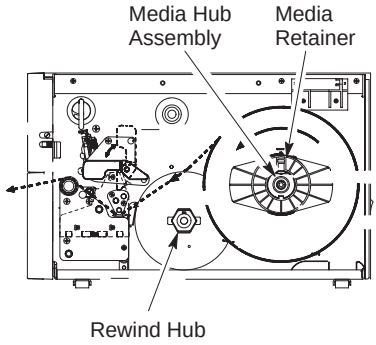


a. Roll the media onto the media hub or onto the rewind hub, as appropriate.

b. If you have rolled the media onto the **media hub**, slide the roll of media off the hub.

c. If you have rolled the media onto the **rewind hub**, lower the lower right-hand front panel.

Unroll the media from the hub, and remove the clasp

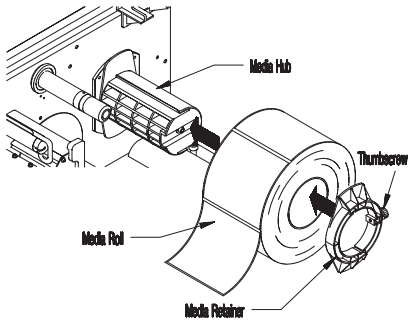


d. Lift and snap the lower right-hand front panel closed.

7 To remove **fan–folded** media, proceed as follows:

a. If the rewind hub was *not* being used, simply pull the media through the loading slot and out of the printer.

Go on to step 8.

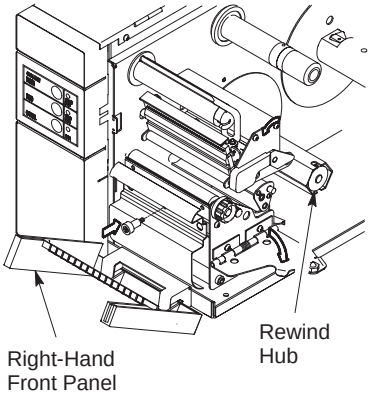


b. If the **rewind hub** was being used, finish rolling the media onto the hub.

Lower the lower right-hand front panel.

c. Unroll the media from the hub, and remove the clasp.

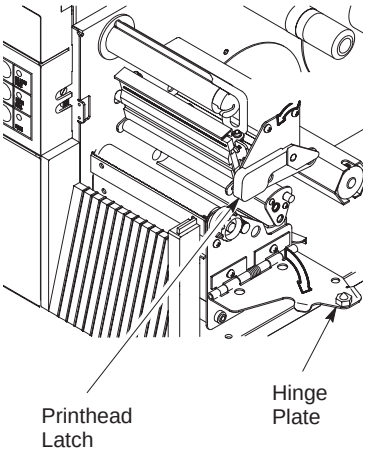
d. Lift and snap the lower right-hand front panel closed.



Continue with step 8.

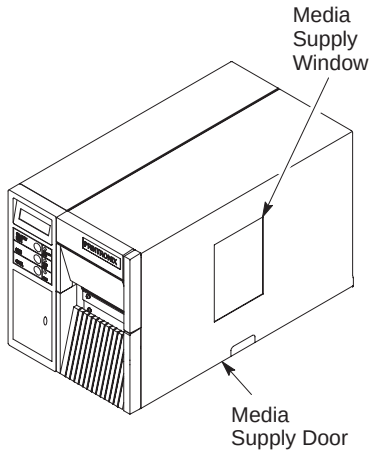
8 Raise the hinge plate, and lower the printhead by rotating the printhead latch clockwise to the latched position.

9 Close the media supply door.



Installing the Ribbon

As noted previously, when printing in thermal transfer mode, the printer requires a ribbon. Use the following procedure to install a new ribbon.



note

The thermal transfer mode is selected through the printer menu system. The main menu is accessed via the secondary operator panel. Refer to the "Configuring the Printer" chapter in the Setup Guide for complete instructions in how to access and use the secondary operator panel.

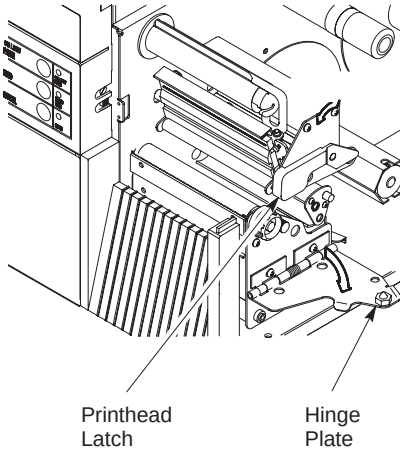
1 Press **ON LINE/PAUSE** to place the printer in the off line mode.

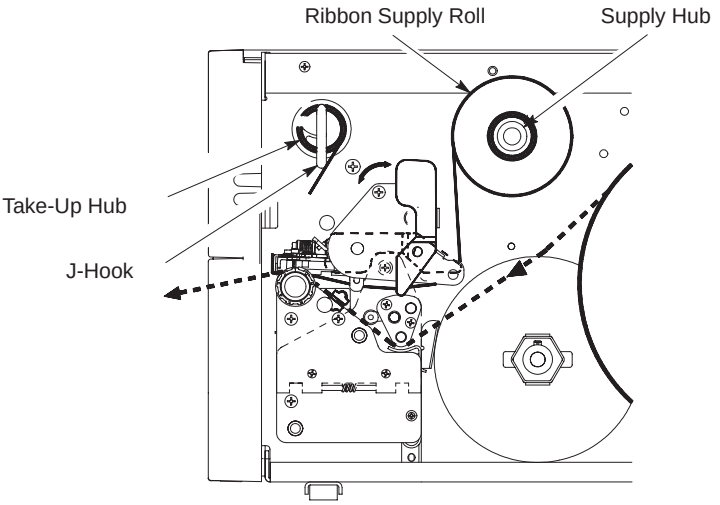
2 Open the media supply door.

3 Rotate the printhead latch counterclockwise to unlatch, and raise the printhead.

Lower the hinge plate.

4 Place the new ribbon supply roll on the supply hub.





Make sure the ribbon roll is pushed up against the hub flange.

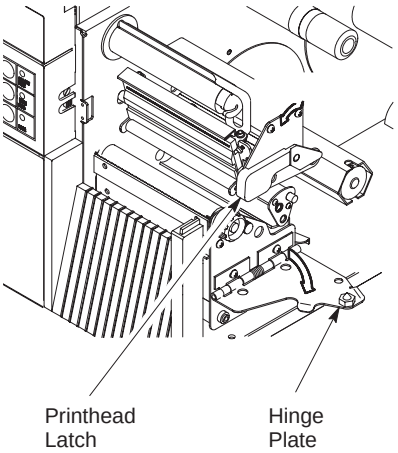
5 Route the ribbon to the take-up hub, as shown.

6 While holding the ribbon take-up hub, rotate the J-hook clockwise to unlatch it.

7 Raise the J-hook upward, and place the end of the ribbon over the take-up hub.

8 Slide the J-hook back into place, as shown. While holding the ribbon take-up hub, rotate the J-hook counterclockwise to latch.

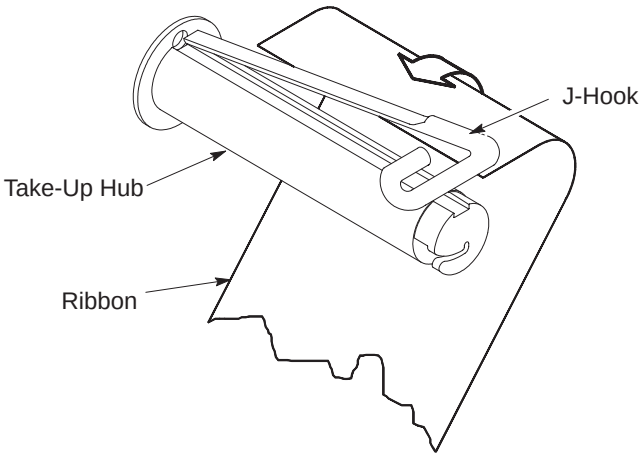
Turn the take-up hub until all the ribbon slack is removed.



9 Raise the hinge plate, and lock the printhead by rotating the printhead latch clockwise.

10 Close the media supply door.

11 Press **ON LINE/PAUSE** to enable printing.



Removing the Ribbon

Generally, ribbons are used to completion and then replaced. Removal of the old ribbon is simply a matter of pulling it off the take–up hub and discarding it.

However, there may be times when the use of *direct thermal* media is required and an installed ribbon has not been completely used up. (As noted previously, when printing in direct thermal mode, the printer does not use a ribbon.)

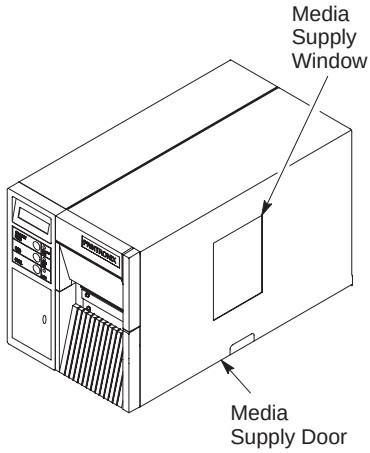
In this case, use the following procedure to remove the ribbon.

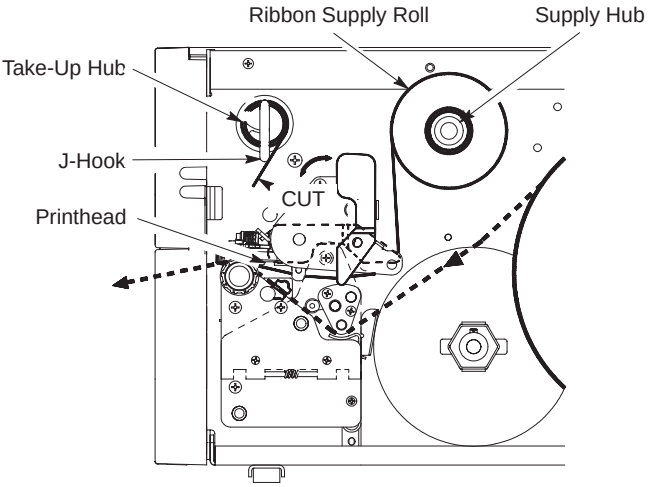
note

The direct thermal mode is selected through the printer menu system. The main menu is accessed via the secondary operator panel. Refer to the "Configuring the Printer" chapter in the Setup Guide for complete instructions in how to access and use the secondary operator panel.

1 Press **ON LINE/PAUSE** to place the printer in the off line mode.

2 Open the media supply door.





3 Cut the ribbon anywhere between the take-up hub and the printhead.

4 Rotate the printhead latch counterclockwise to raise the printhead, and then lower the hinge plate.

5 While holding the ribbon take-up hub, rotate the J-hook clockwise to unlatch it.

6 Slide the used ribbon off the hub, and dispose of it.

7 Turn the ribbon supply hub clockwise to draw the unused portion of the ribbon back onto the supply roll.

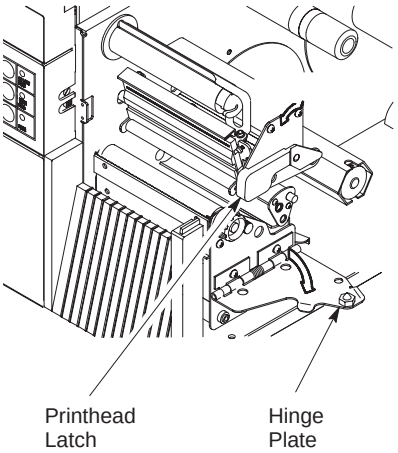
note

You may leave the unused portion of the ribbon in place until the next thermal transfer print job, at which time you may reinstall it by following the ribbon installation procedure.

8 Raise the hinge plate, and lock the printhead by rotating the printhead latch clockwise.

9 Close the media supply door.

10 Press **ON LINE/PAUSE** to enable printing.



Selecting Print Mode

PRINT MODE selects the printing mode of the printer. Selecting DIRECT THERMAL MODE activates direct thermal printing mode (ribbon must *not* be installed). Selecting THERMAL XFER activates thermal transfer printing mode (ribbon required).

1 Press **ON LINE/PAUSE** to place the printer in the off line mode.

OFFLINE
IGP/PGL

2 Press ↓ twice to enter the paper control menu.

PAPER CONTROL
Page Width

3 Press ← → until the print mode menu is displayed.

PAPER CONTROL
Print Mode

4 Press ↓ to enter the print mode menu.

Print Mode
Thermal Xfer *

5 Press ← → to select between thermal transfer and direct thermal print methods.

Print Mode
Thermal Xfer *

Print Mode
Direct Thermal

6 Press **ENTER** to select the option.

Print Mode *
Direct Thermal

7 Press **ON LINE/PAUSE** to place the printer in the on line mode.

ONLINE
IGP/PGL

Selecting Gap Sensor

GAP SENSOR selects the type of media used for printing. The options for this selection are as follows:

- TRANSMISSIVE (see–through)
- REFLECTIVE (black stripe)
- NONE (default)

1 Press **ON LINE/PAUSE** to place the printer in the off line mode.

OFFLINE
IGP/PGL

2 Press to enter the configuration menus.

USER CONFIG
PAPER CONTROL

3 Press to reach the printer control menu.

USER CONFIG
PRINTER CONTROL

4 Press to enter the printer control menu.

PRINTER CONTROL
Media Handling

5 Press to reach the gap sensor menu.

PRINTER CONTROL
Gap Sensor

6 Press to enter the gap sensor menu.

Gap Sensor
None *

7 Press to view the desired setting.

Gap Sensor
None *

Gap Sensor
Reflective

Gap Sensor
Transmissive

8 Press **ENTER** to select the setting.

Gap Sensor
Reflective *

9 Press **ON LINE/PAUSE** to place the printer in the on line mode.

ONLINE
IGP/PGL

Setting Print Intensity

The PRINT INTENSITY adjustment is used to balance a new printhead, so that it prints at the same level of darkness as did the previous head. You can specify intensity values from –10 through +10. The factory default setting is 0.

1 Press **ON LINE/PAUSE** to place the printer in the off line mode.

OFFLINE
IGP/PGL

2 Press ↓ to enter the configuration menus.

USER CONFIG
PAPER CONTROL

3 Press → to reach the printer control menu.

USER CONFIG
PRINTER CONTROL

4 Press ↓ to enter the printer control menu.

PRINTER CONTROL
Media Handling

5 Press ← → to reach the print intensity menu.

PRINTER CONTROL
Print Intensity

6 Press ↓ to enter the print intensity menu.

Print Intensity
0*

7 Press ← → to select the desired value.

Print Intensity
–10

Print Intensity
0*

Print Intensity
10

Print Intensity
–3

8 Press **ENTER** to select the setting.

9 Press **ON LINE/PAUSE** to place the printer in the on line mode.

ONLINE
IGP/PGL

Selecting Media Handling

The options for this selection are as follows:

- SELF STRIP – selects the self strip option.

  When the label present sensor is installed and enabled, the printer can be configured for “one up” printing.

- CUTTER selects the cutter mechanism option.

  The cutter must be installed to use this option.

- TEAR OFF –selects the tear off option.
- CONTINUOUS – selects the continuous feed option.

1 Press **ON LINE/PAUSE** to place the printer in the off line mode.

OFFLINE IGP/PGL

2 Press to enter the configuration menus.

USER CONFIG PAPER CONTROL

3 Press to reach the printer control menu.

USER CONFIG PRINTER CONTROL

4 Press to enter the printer control menu.

PRINTER CONTROL Media Handling

5 Press to enter the media handling menu.

Media Handling
Continuous *

6 Press to view the desired option.

Media Handling
Continuous

Media Handling
Tear Off

Media Handling
Cutter

Media Handling
Self Strip

7 Press **ENTER** to select the desired option.

Media Handling
Self Strip *

8 Press **ON LINE/PAUSE** to place the printer in the on line mode.

ONLINE
IGP/PGL

Selecting the Ribbon Saver

RIBBON SAVER selects the ribbon saver option, if the ribbon saver is installed.

1 Press **ON LINE/PAUSE** to place the printer in the off line mode.

OFFLINE
IGP/PGL

2 Press ↓ to enter the configuration menus.

USER CONFIG
PAPER CONTROL

3 Press → to reach the printer control menu.

USER CONFIG
PRINTER CONTROL

4 Press ↓ to enter the printer control menu.

PRINTER CONTROL
Media Handling

5 Press ← → to reach the ribbon saver menu.

PRINTER CONTROL
Ribbon Saver

6 Press ↓ to enter the ribbon saver menu.

Ribbon Saver
Disable *

7 Press ← → to view the desired option.

Ribbon Saver
Disable *

Ribbon Saver
Enable

8 Press **ENTER** to select the option.

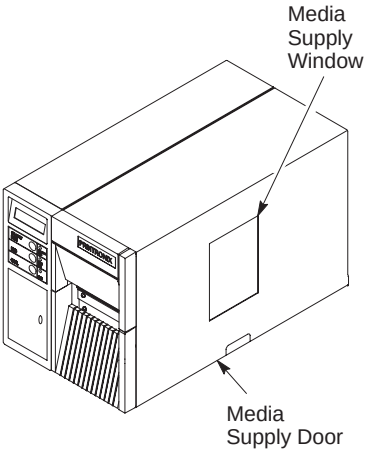
Ribbon Saver
Enable *

9 Press **ON LINE/PAUSE** to place the printer in the on line mode.

ONLINE
IGP/PGL

Cleaning the Printer

Keeping the printer clean will help ensure efficient operation and good print quality.



warning

Disconnect the AC power cord before cleaning the printer.

Cleaning the Outside of the Cabinet

Clean the outside of the cabinet with a soft, lint–free cloth and mild detergent (dishwashing liquid works well). Do not use abrasive powders or chemical solvents. Clean the window with plain water or a mild window cleaner.

caution

Always apply the cleaning solution to the cloth; never pour cleaning solution directly onto the printer.

Cleaning Inside the Cabinet

Over time, it is normal for dust, particles of paper, and ink to accumulate inside the printer. Paper dust and ink build–up must be removed periodically to avoid degraded print quality. To clean the interior of the printer, perform the following steps.

caution

To avoid damage to the printer, be extremely careful when vacuuming and dusting around the printhead and surrounding areas.

1. Power–off the printer and unplug the power cord.
2. Unload the media supply (page 14).
3. Remove the ribbon, if installed (page 20).

4 Using a soft–bristled, non–metallic brush, remove dust particles from the media path, ribbon guides and ribbon path.

5 Brush and vacuum accumulated dust or residue, especially in the printhead areas.

6 Using a cloth dampened with anhydrous alcohol, clean the ribbon guides, rollers and mechanical assemblies.

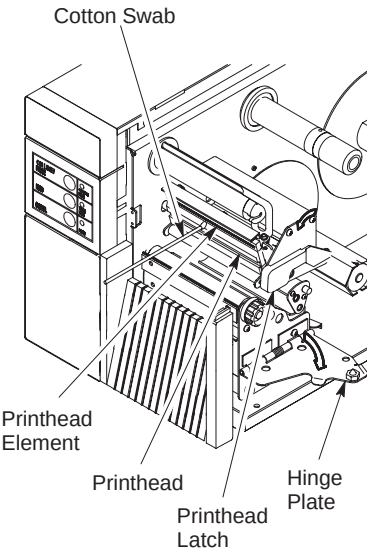
7 The printhead will require cleaning after extended normal operation. Regular cleaning will ensure the highest print quality. Clean the printhead using a clean cotton swab and anhydrous alcohol.

8 When the cutter or tear bar become dirty with gummed media backing, clean the area using a clean, lint–free cloth and anhydrous alcohol.

9 Wipe the cabinet interior with a clean, lint–free cloth damp (not wet) with water and mild detergent, or spray the surfaces lightly with window cleaning solution.

10 Dry the interior with a dry, clean, lint–free cloth.

11 Reload the media (page 6) and ribbon (page 17).



Fault Messages

If a printer fault occurs, a specific message appears in the message display. When this happens, correct the fault immediately.

You can correct most faults by performing a simple procedure, such as clearing a media jam or reloading media or ribbon. For more serious faults, however, call an authorized Printronix service representative.

PROM FAULT

PROM Fault

Power–up initialization test detected a PROM failure. Contact your authorized service representative.

RAM FAULT

RAM Fault

Power up initialization test detected a RAM failure. Contact your authorized service representative.

RTC RAM FAULT

RTC RAM Fault

The RTC non–volatile RAM failed the checksum test. Contact your authorized service representative.

PRINTHEAD CONTROL FAIL

Printhead Control Fail

Thermal printhead control circuit failed. Contact your authorized service representative.

A–D CONVERTER FAIL

A–D Converter Fail

Analog–to–digital converter failed. Contact your authorized service representative.

PAPER JAM

Paper Jam

Possible causes:

- Improper media.
- Actual label length greater than programmed label length.

PAPER EMPTY

Paper Empty

Printer is out of media stock.

MEDIA FAULT

Media Fault

The ribbon system detected a fault.

Possible causes:

- Out of ribbon.
- Ribbon motion was stopped.
- Obstructions in the media movement.
- Paper motion stopped.

CUTTER FAULT

Cutter Fault

The cutter operation failed.

Possible causes:

- Cutter is jammed.
- Defective cutter hardware.

RIBBON SAVER FAULT

Ribbon Saver Fault

Ribbon saver operation failed.

Possible causes:

- Obstruction in ribbon area.
- Defective ribbon saver hardware.

PRINTHEAD TEST FAIL

Printhead Test Fail

The printer has detected a failure in one or more printhead dots.

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